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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ETTC](#) [IR](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARIAN QUESTIONS GOM'S IRAN POLICY

REF: KL 337 ANWAR CRITICIZES GOVERNMENT

Classified By: Political Section Chief Mark D. Clark for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

11. (C) Summary and Comment: Malaysia's position on Iran's nuclear program is subject to criticism and scrutiny not only from the political opposition but, as recent questions in Parliament illustrate, from elements of the ruling UMNO party as well. The Foreign Ministry responded to an UMNO MP's question by focusing on Iran's right to peaceful nuclear technology and the IAEA's important verification role. Prime Minister Abdullah's National Front coalition will continue to tread very lightly on Iran issues in part to avoid any perception it is acting under U.S. pressure. End Summary and Comment.

12. (C) On April 27 de facto opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim criticized the Government for bowing to U.S. pressure⁸ and ejecting Iranian entities from the Defense Services Asia (DSA) military sales exhibition (Reftel). The Islamist party PAS, a key component in Anwar's opposition People's Alliance, also has a history of challenging the government on Iran, e.g., having accused PM Abdullah of "kow-towing" to the U.S. after the PM in one instance called on Iran to respect UN resolutions in April 2007.

13. (C) On May 12, Nur Jazlan, an ambitious MP of the ruling UMNO party who in April called for PM Abdullah to step down, submitted a written question in Parliament to the Minister of Foreign Affairs requesting the Government's stance on Iran's decision to proceed with development of nuclear technology for peaceful means, and "whether Malaysia will support action by the United States and her allies to attack Iran if Iran refuses to cease its nuclear programs." Nur Jazlan is well known to the Embassy and frequently voices support for closer U.S. ties. Nur Jazlan shared with us the Foreign Ministry's written reply (replies to MP's questions normally are not publicized, unless the MP choose to do so). The MFA responded that "Iran has the absolute right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. However, in this context IAEA has a role in verification and safeguarding measures concerning nuclear programs. IAEA should be given an opportunity to carry out its verifications and safeguarding measures to ensure that the Iranian nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. In this context Malaysia is of the opinion that this is one of the best options for a lasting and just resolution acceptable to all parties."

14. (C) On the hypothetical question of whether the GOM would support "action by the U.S. and her allies to attack Iran," the MFA stated that any use of force would require a UNSC mandate and "cannot be done arbitrarily and especially unilaterally by any country" and would be viewed as "ignoring (the) international norm." The MFA added that an unilateral

action against Iran "will further complicate the situation in
West Asia which continues to be unstable."
KEITH